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THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU : அதைப் பயிருக்கு விட்டாலும், பயிர் உடனே செத்துப் போய்விடும். இது வரையிலும் அதை ஒன்றுக்கும் பிரயோசனப்படுத்தவில்லை. எதற்கு அதைப் பிரயோசனப்படுத்தலாம என்பதைப்பற்றி ஆராய்ச்சி செய்ய வேண்டும். அந்த ஆராய்ச்சி இப்பொழுது நடந்துகொண்டிருக்கிறது.

Lay-Secretary and Treasurer of the Kasturba Gandhi Women and Children's Hospital, Madras

* 84 Q.—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Revenue be pleased to state whether there is any proposal to post a suitable woman member of the service as Lay-Secretary and Treasurer of the Kasturba Gandhi Women and Children's Hospital, Madras?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU : No, Sir.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Government consider the question of deputing a woman member of the service, either an Upper Division Clerk or a Superintendent from the Secretariat or from the Office of the Director of Medical Services in view of the gosha nature of this hospital?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU : I shall be glad to do it. But no woman candidate is eligible. As and when there are eligible persons, of course, we can consider about it.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : If no suitable lady candidate is available, will the Government ensure that a person of mature age is posted as Lay-Secretary in this hospital?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU : In this case, mature or immature age is immaterial. We want a qualified candidate for the work to be done.

DR. A. SREENIVASAN : Has any complaint been lodged with the Government because there is a male Lay-Secretary in this hospital?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU : Absolutely not.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Questions are over.

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—INFORMATION *RE* DELAY IN ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : On a point of information, Sir. May I bring to your kind notice, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that as far as questions in this House are concerned, it is our experience, rather a sad experience, that months and months elapse before questions are replied to? I gave notice of a question at the end of last month with a request that it might be accepted as a short notice question. I know personally that it would take hardly half an hour for the Secretariat to prepare a reply to that

question. Apart from the fact that it was not accepted as a short notice question, though twenty days have elapsed, the question has not yet been answered here. My point in bringing this to your notice is this, Sir. The very purpose of the question is lost if the Government choose to reply to questions according to their own convenience. I think mine is not the only case of its kind. There are very many cases like this. Some procedure should be evolved on a par with the procedure obtaining in the Lok Sabha whereby Ministers can reply to our questions, either short notice or starred, as early as possible. Otherwise, our experience is that questions given notice of months before never see the light of day.

* SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Sir, I entirely agree with the observations made by the hon. Member. I would request the Chair and also the Leader of the House to evolve a scheme by which questions can be answered promptly. I am afraid there is not sufficient staff in the Legislative Council Office to look to the questions. I have also suggested to the Hon. Chairman that he may examine the question of strengthening the Council Office establishment with a view to see that prompt answers are ensured to the questions put by hon. Members.

* SRI V. V. RAMASWAMI : From the remarks made by the hon. Member Sri T. Purushotham, it looks as though there is delay in our Council Office. He said that he wanted the Council section to be strengthened. I think that all the replies are due from the respective departments. If the Departments of the Secretariat do not take prompt action and get prompt reply, what can the Council Office do?

* SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : I never meant any reflection at all against the Council Office. What I meant was, if we had sufficient clerical assistance, perhaps things could have been expedited.

DR. MAHOMED USMAN : It is clear that the delay is not in the Council Office, but in the other Departments of Government.

SRI B. K. NALLASWAMI : I gave notice of a question 20 or 25 days back. It has not yet been approved or disapproved by our office here. I think there is some difficulty in the Council office itself.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I rise on a point which affects our fundamental right. I raised this question and luckily I was supported by many hon. Members. I think the Leader of the House is not going to reply. Will you kindly find a way so that I may force him to reply, Sir? (Laughter).

The Hon. Sri R. Venkataraman rose . .

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The Hon. Minister has now come to the rescue of the hon. Member.

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* THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The complaint is valid (laughter) and I thought silence was acquiescence. The rule that the questions which are one month old may be included in the Agenda may be adopted in this House also so that whatever answers are available will be given and further answers will be supplied later.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I wish to give some information to hon. Members. The number of questions admitted is 288 and the number answered is 114. Answers are in hand for 34 questions. Extension of time has been granted for 29 questions. We have not received any answers for 145 questions.

As far as the short notice questions are concerned, it is within the right of the Hon. Minister to waive notice and if he does not do so, we cannot do anything in the matter.

As far as the office is concerned, I think there is no delay here. Whenever questions are sent by hon. Members, they are looked into promptly.

SRI B. K. NALLASWAMI : There is delay in the Council office. It is twenty days since I sent a question. I do not know even about the approval of the question of its disapproval. Nothing has been done in the matter.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It will be looked into.

III.—CALLING ATTENTION TO THE SHORTAGE OF WRITING AND PRINTING PAPER IN THE MARKET AND THE CONSEQUENT RISE IN THE COST OF PAPER. 11-20 a.m.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Mr. Deputy Chairman, under rule 41 (1) of the Council Rules, I seek your permission to call the attention of the Minister for Labour and Industries to a matter of urgent public importance, viz., the shortage of writing and printing paper in the market and the consequent rise in the cost of paper and the hardship caused (i) to the publishers for printing the text-books and releasing them in time and (ii) to the educational institutions for conducting their terminal and annual examinations. The text-book publishing season and note-book season have already begun. During the last few months, on account of non-availability and consequent high cost of printing paper, many publishers have used newsprint and other inferior paper not fit for printing text-books. Text-books using inferior paper do not last even for three months.

Further, it is reported that the paper mills do not generally accept direct indents from *bona fide* consumers. Even when they accept, paper is supplied after a very long time, say, after a year. The sole distributors in each State supply only to wholesale dealers and not to the retailers. The paper dealers, as things stand at present, are not bound by the price fixed by the mill and they go on increasing the price. If the mill price and the price at which